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CHRISTOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

REV. JOHN COWPER GRANBERY, PH.D.
Philippi, W. Va.

The First Epistle of Peter presents, in the words of Wrede, "eine Reihe von Schwierigkeiten und Dunkelheiten."¹ The difficulties are created by the address and the conclusion. Harnack solves the problem by removing the address and the conclusion altogether, understanding 5:1 (*μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων*) not in a literal sense.² According to this view, the author was a prominent teacher and confessor of about 90 A. D., perhaps earlier, who did not pretend to be Peter. Another, probably the author of Second Peter, invented the beginning and the end of the epistle in order to give it apostolic authority. The view of McGiffert³ is similar, except that he holds to its true epistolary character (1:3, 4, 12; 2:13; 4:12; 5:1-5, 9). The epistle was, he thinks, originally anonymous, like Hebrews, Barnabas, and the Johannine epistles, and the name of Peter was attached in the second century, some scribe probably writing it on the margin of the manuscript, because he thought he saw reason for regarding it as the work of Peter. If we take the epistle as it stands, the more likely theory is that of pseudonymity, unless indeed we make Silvanus responsible for the epistle in the name of Peter. That was an age in which men could think it a virtue for a writer to withhold his own name in favor of some great master. It must be acknowledged that this straightforward epistle does not bear such palpable marks of pseudepigraphy as, for example, Second Peter. But in view of the pseudepigraphic customs of the time, it is conceivable that a Roman Christian, wishing to issue a letter of consolation to his persecuted fellow-Christians of Asia Minor under an apostolic title, chose the name of Peter. In

¹ "Bemerkungen zu Harnack's Hypothese über die Adresse des I. Petrusbriefs," *Zeitschrift für die N. T. Wissenschaft*, I, 1900, S. 75-85—an able reply to Harnack.

² *Chronologie*, S. 451-65.

³ *Apostolic Age*, p. 596.

fact we know six early Christian writings connected with the name of Peter—the two canonical letters, the Acts, the Gospel, the Preaching, and the Apocalypse of Peter. Great as are the difficulties in connection with the authorship of First Peter, the most difficult hypothesis is that Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, even with the help of Silvanus, wrote this letter in fairly good Greek, saturated as it is with characteristic Pauline thought and vocabulary, to gentile churches of Asia Minor founded chiefly by Paul.

The conditions set forth in the epistle, reflecting a general persecution of Christians as such (4:15, 16; 5:9), are best satisfied by the reign of Domitian (81–96 A. D.), and the doctrinal affinities are mostly with the literature of this period. But we must leave open the possibility of a date within the reign of Trajan (98–117 A. D.), either about 100 (Jülicher) or about 112. The fact that one suffered *ὡς Χριστιανός* (4:15) reminds us of the famous letter of Pliny to Trajan regarding the treatment of Christians, about 112 A. D., and if we take the word *ἀλλοτρίεπισκοπος* in the same verse to refer to the judicial informer, the delator, which is not necessary, this late date is confirmed. But this would take the epistle far down toward the *terminus ad quem*, the letter of Polycarp (*ca.* 116 A. D.), which makes frequent quotation from First Peter. If the use of First Peter by Clement of Rome could be established, the year 95 A. D. would be the *terminus ad quem*, but the numerous striking resemblances (for example, *ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν*, I Pet. 4:8 and I Clem. 49:5) may be explained by proximity of date and place of composition.

The epistle was written apparently from Rome⁴ (so far as we know, Babylon played small part in early Christian history)⁵ to Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1:1)—five provinces that comprise the whole of Asia Minor north of Mount Taurus. Though *παρεπίδημοι Διασπορᾶς*, the readers were in general gentile believers (1:14, 18; 2:9, 10; 4:3, 4). The purpose of the epistle is to admonish and encourage (*παρακαλεῖν*, 5:12) its readers patiently to endure sufferings that have come upon them on account

⁴ 5:13 (Apoc. 14:8).

⁵ See Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 2d ed., 1908, II, pp. 142–52.

of their Christian confession and to live in every way worthy of the Christian name. The incentives to this course are to be found in the hope of a blessedness to be obtained through suffering and obedience, and in the example of Christ. The common church doctrine is employed wherever it will serve the practical aim. While the object is not indoctrination, for the writer the Christian world-view lies behind all right thinking and right conduct. The epistle offers no original doctrinal contribution to the development of early Christianity, but it does bring incidentally to light ideas that are not given definite expression in other writings that have come down to us from the period to which it belongs.

The epistle is then not to be understood as in any sense representing the most primitive Christianity—either as actually pre-Pauline, or as Petrine with comparatively slight Pauline influence. We find here no genuine personal reminiscence of Jesus and no echo of the old controversies about the law and faith and the relative standing of Jew and Gentile. The permanent Pauline contributions to Christianity are presupposed throughout, but by this time the sharp points of Paul's system have been worn down. Some of his characteristic expressions and ideas are employed, especially from the Epistle to the Romans; but the specifically Pauline thoughts of justification by faith, freedom from the law, dying to the flesh and living in the Spirit, mystical union with Christ, are wanting. Paul's use of baptism in Rom. 6:3: "All we who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death," recurs after a fashion in I Pet. 3:21. In this chapter Paul continues in his striking and profound mystical manner (Rom. 6:6 ff.): "Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that we should no longer be in bondage to sin, for he that has died is justified from sin," etc.; whereas in I Pet. 4:1 it is expressed: "He that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." On the other hand the consciousness of the value of Christianity, of the high and peculiar calling of God's people, of the greatness and preciousness of the promises, of the sacred obligations of the Christian profession, are no less clear and impressive than with Paul.⁶

We now inquire what is central in the doctrinal background from

⁶ So Pfleiderer, *Das Urchristentum*, 2d ed., 1902, II, S. 506.

which this practical homily proceeds. That which for the writer comes first is the revelation of God and a way of life in Christ. His religious world is the Christian world, his view of God is that which has historically come from Christ; he worships "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:3), God is a faithful Creator (4:19), is mighty (5:6), is holy (1:5), is judge of living and dead (4:5), is one who judges righteously (2:23) and without respect of persons (1:17), is one who foreknows the elect (1:12), is one who resists the proud (5:5); but he is above all Father (1:17) and the God of all grace (5:10), is longsuffering (5:20) and merciful (1:3). The means by which this grace is communicated is the preaching of the gospel, the word of good news (1:12, 25). This then is the first and most general item in the writer's Christology: the God he worships is, as he thinks, the God of Jesus, and his readers are *οἱ δι' αὐτοῦ πιστοὶ εἰς Θεόν* (1:21). In Christianity, in Christ, he finds a helpful, satisfying experience of God, and as a correlate of that faith the true way of life.

The second item in his christological faith is the redemptive death of Christ. "For Christ also died once for sins as the righteous one for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (3:18). He "bore our sins in his body on the tree, that having died unto sins we might live unto righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed" (2:24). This language means just what it seems to mean; namely, that, as it is expressed in Heb. 9:28, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and it is here added that the cross was the altar upon which he was offered. The writer constantly uses the conception of Isa., chap. 53. To be sure, there is introduced an ethical significance: in Christ's sacrificial death there is an example for our imitation; those to whom he writes were redeemed from their vain heathen life handed down from their fathers, with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and without blemish (1:18, 19), and in suffering for them Christ has given them an example, that they should follow his steps (2:21). But fundamental is the thought of the expiatory death, though the use made of the death of Christ is ethical.

An ever-present thought is that of the coming glory of Christ, when he is revealed, and in this Christians shall share. Its certainty rests on his resurrection and exaltation. God has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Christ from the dead

(1:3). This hope has been awakened by the preaching of the gospel: the readers have been begotten through the living and abiding word of God (1:23). The test and fruit of Christian faith and hope are to be found in obedience, which consists in a holy life after the character of God (1:14-16); more especially in patient endurance of suffering, and in fervent brotherly love, which covers a multitude of sins (1:22; 4:8).

The christological peculiarities are the doctrine of the inspiration of the prophets through the spirit of the pre-existing Christ, and that of the descent of Christ to Hades for the purpose of preaching to the spirits in prison. The present paper seeks to interpret these two special ideas.

1. Upon the first topic—the inspiration of the prophets through the pre-existing Christ—the following are the passages to come before us:

For this Christ was indeed destined before the foundation of the world, but he has been manifested at the end of the times for your sake (1:20).

To this salvation the prophets, who prophesied in regard to the grace intended for you, directed their inquiries and researches, seeking to find out to what season or what kind of a season the spirit of Christ within them was pointing, when testifying in advance to the sufferings which would befall Christ and the glories which would follow; and to them it was revealed that not for themselves but for you were they performing this service in regard to truths which have been announced to you through those who, by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, have brought you the good tidings—matters into which angels are longing to look (1:10-12).

In the first of these passages we find contrasted the foreknowledge by God of Christ before the foundation of the world and his manifestation at the end of the times. As the translation given above implies, foreknowledge (*προεγνωσμένου* is the form here) in this passage as elsewhere in the Scriptures ("Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee"—Jer. 1:5) is not colorless prescience, but previous designation to a position or function.⁷ The idea of Christ's designation before the foundations of the world were laid is a familiar one, finding frequent expression both in Jewish messianism and in Christian literature (Eph. 3:11; II Tim. 1:9).

⁷ See Hort, *Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter*, *in loc.*

"Foreknown" by itself does not of course necessarily imply the personal pre-existence of the object foreknown; the expression is used of believers in I Pet. 1:2. But pre-existence is taken for granted, and the second clause places it beyond all doubt. That which is manifested existed in a state of concealment before its manifestation. Nowhere is it said of believers that they were first foreknown before the foundation of the world and then manifested. In some of the passages either in a primary or a secondary sense Pauline, it is the mystery concerning Christ which is manifested, as in Rom. 16:25, 26: "the mystery kept in silence through times eternal, but now manifested;" but in the passage before us it is Christ himself who is manifested.

Both clauses find an exact parallel in Enoch 48:6, 7: "And for this reason he has been chosen and hidden before him before the creation of the world and forevermore, and the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits has revealed to him the holy and righteous;" and again 62:7: "For the Son of Man was hidden before him and the Most High preserved him in the presence of his might and revealed him to the elect." To these may be added Apocalypse of Ezra 12:32: "This is the anointed one, whom the Most High has kept to the end of days, who shall spring up out of the seed of David, and he shall come and speak to them and reprove them for their wickedness and their unrighteousness, and shall heap up before them their contemptuous dealings." In I Tim. 3:16 we have a fragment of an early Christian hymn, of which the first line is: "He was manifested in the flesh" (*ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί*). The idea is common in the Johannine writings: John 1:14, 31: I John 3:5, 8, for example.⁷

In the second passage it is stated that the prophets of old who foretold the messianic salvation sought to fathom its meaning and to determine at what appointed date it would come; the Spirit of Christ within them pointed out the sufferings that would come upon Christ and the glories that would follow them, and it was revealed to them that the realization of their vision was not for their own time,

⁷ It will be seen that First Peter is using not the Pauline conception of an incarnation but the messianic conception of a revelation. For Paul, Christ's appearance was not a mere *φανερούσθαι* but a *κενοῦσθαι*, *ταπεινούσθαι*, and *πτωχεύειν*. See Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, p. 328.

but for the recipients of the good tidings in the time of the Holy Spirit's ministration.

The problem here is to determine in what sense the Spirit of Christ inspired the prophets. Kühl⁹ takes the reference to the ideal Christ, who existed only in the foreknowledge of God. Hort says: "This cannot possibly mean the sufferings of Christ in our sense of the word, i. e., the sufferings which as a matter of history befell the historical Christ." Why not? "It is intelligible only from the point of view of the prophets and their contemporaries, the sufferings destined for Messiah." But the New Testament writers did not take the point of view of the prophets and their contemporaries; they wrote from their own standpoint. Their presupposition was the identity of the Old Testament and the New Testament salvation.¹⁰ The use of Christ's pre-existence in this connection is but a part of the process of Christianizing the Hebrew Scriptures. The Old Testament was the Bible of the Christians, and they read back into it their new experiences.¹¹ The conception of sufferings destined for the Christ is a common one.¹² In Acts 26:22, 23 we are told that Paul testified (*μαρτυρούμενος*), saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses had said should occur, that the Christ must suffer. There is no sharp contrast between the pre-existent Christ and the historic Christ, and of "the ideal Christ" the writer knew nothing.

The conception was common that the Holy Spirit is the source of prophecy (Acts 1:16, and often). In Paul's thought the Spirit and Christ are very closely related, indeed at times almost interchangeable (II Cor. 3:17, 18; I Cor. 12:3). In the period in which our writing arose there was no difficulty in considering Christ as the inspirer of prophecy, whether as pre-existent, historic, or glorified. The historic Christ was represented as the revealer (Matt. 11:27; characteristically in the Fourth Gospel, as 1:18), in whose name men prophesied (Matt. 7:22), and who sent forth prophets (Matt. 23:34). The

⁹ Meyer, *Kommentar*.

¹⁰ See, for example, I Pet. 1:25.

¹¹ "Cette théorie n'est que la formule d'une expérience religieuse, celle du juif nourri des espérances les plus pures et qui salue en Jésus Christ celui en qui il croyait, avant de le connaître."—Monnier, *Le première épître de l'apôtre Pierre*, p. 53.

¹² As in Luke 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3.

exalted Christ poured forth the spirit of prophecy from heaven (Acts 2:33). "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Apoc. 19:10). Between Hebrew and Christian prophecy there is in this respect no distinction; in each instance Christ inspired the prophets.¹³

The prophetic searching for the time of messianic deliverance will be recognized as a characteristic of Jewish messianism. An instance of such inquiry is in Dan., chap. 9, where the seer discovers in the prophecy of Jeremiah (25:11, 12; 29:10) that the number of years for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem was seventy. But as the Jews were still being oppressed by the heathen and the temple was again desolated, he was perplexed by the prediction. While he was praying, the man Gabriel flew swiftly and caused him to understand the vision. He explained that the period was not seventy years, but seventy weeks of years, and that after the 490 years were ended reconciliation for iniquity would be made, the polluted temple reconstructed, and the messianic age introduced.

The service that the prophets were rendering to a future age is also frequently brought out in apocalyptic literature. Daniel was to close and seal the book till the time of the end (12:4, 9). Our passage may even be a quotation from Enoch 1:2: "I understood what I saw, but not for this generation, but for the remote generations that are to come."¹⁴ The interest of the angels in these matters may have been suggested by Enoch 9:1. The thought is closely akin to that of Eph. 3:10.

2. Our second special topic—the descent of Christ to Hades for the purpose of preaching to the spirits in prison—is set forth in the following passages:

"In the spirit also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient, when the patience of God waited,

¹³ So Barnabas, Chap. 5: "The prophets, who received grace from him, prophesied of him" (οἱ προφῆται, ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἔχοντες τὴν χάριν, εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπροφήτευσαν).

¹⁴ J. R. Harris (*Expositor*, VI, iv, pp. 194–99) suggests an interesting emendation. Compare the following passages: Enoch 1:2; Matt. 13:17; Luke 10:24; I Pet. 1:12, 13. In the latter passage διηκόνουν is a textual error for διανοῦντο, after διανοούμενην of Enoch 1:2. Then there should be no break in the paragraph, I Pet. 1:13 following naturally with διαβολας.

in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared; into which a few souls, that is eight, escaped through water" (3:19, 20).

"For this is why the good tidings were preached even to the dead in order that they might be judged indeed as men in the flesh, but live according to God in spirit" (4:6).

Taking the first passage in its context, we are given to understand that Christ by his death led sinners to God, and that his death made possible also his descent to Hades, where he offered salvation even to the most ungodly; besides having led men to God he made the journey to Hades and preached to spirits there imprisoned, not indeed in his earthly body but as spirit. It is clear that the author is referring to an idea already familiar to his readers. The time, content, and result of the preaching are not specified; but the time appears to have been after his death, and before his resurrection, the message that which Jesus preached to sinful men during his earthly life, while of the result the passage gives us no information. Who were the spirits in prison? They were disobedient beings, either men or angels, in the days of Noah. In the literature of New Testament times the word *πνεῦμα* is used of angels and various beings, of the spirits of the spirit-world more than of the souls of dead men, but the Book of Enoch and Heb. 12:23 show that the word is used also of the departed. *Φυλακή* seems to have been used to describe the underworld in general, including the abode of the fallen angels and that of ungodly men until the day of judgment. If the second passage refers to the same event, our impression that it was the gospel that was preached, and that the recipients were the dead, is confirmed, the conspicuous sinners of the days of Noah having been mentioned in the first passage only in a representative capacity.

The older objection to this obvious interpretation was that the doctrine of Christ's preaching after his death to unbelievers who had perished in the deluge would be an isolated idea occurring nowhere else in Scripture. An acquaintance with the eschatology then current deprives this objection of much of its force. Connecting our first passage in thought with I Pet. 1:11, where Christ is represented as having inspired the prophets of old, and with II Pet. 2:5, where Noah is called "a preacher of righteousness," these older inter-

preters explained that the pre-existent Christ preached in and through Noah to Noah's contemporaries. This view was set forth with hesitation by Augustine (letter to Evodius), and was adopted by Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theologians. The absence of the article before *ἀπειθήσασιν* has been thought to imply that the participle should be translated: "when once they disobeyed," so that the meaning would be: Christ preached to the disobedient men of Noah's time, who are now spirits in prison. Likewise the second passage would mean that the gospel was preached during their lifetime to those who are now dead.

The exploitation of Jewish apocalyptic and the study of comparative religion are beginning to make popular the view that the spirits in prison are the fallen angels, the sons of God of Gen. 6:1-4, the sinful angels of the Book of Enoch and the Book of Jubilees, who "kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation," and seduced the daughters of men, and whom God cast down to Tartarus (Jude, vs. 6; II Pet. 2:4). The tradition appearing in Gen., chap. 6, certainly underwent transformations and played a considerable part in the thought of later Judaism. This position, advocated by Baur, has been ably set forth by Spitta,¹⁵ who thinks that it was not the personal, historic Christ who preached to the fallen angels, but the pre-existent Christ, who proclaimed their judgment through Enoch.

This view has been recently revived and defended in yet a new form by Cramer, Harris, and others. In order to appreciate the position with all of its force let us bring before ourselves a passage from the book of Enoch (chaps. 11, 12). Before Enoch's final translation he is transported in spirit to the other world, and to him is committed the task of announcing condemnation to the watchers of heaven who abandoned the holy eternal place and defiled themselves with women. While he is performing this mission the sinful angels, who cannot address God nor lift up their eyes to heaven on account of shame for the sins for which they are being punished, beseech Enoch to become their intercessor, to draw up a petition for them that they may find forgiveness, and to take their petition into the presence of God in heaven. He accedes to their request,

¹⁵ *Christi Predigt an die Geister*, 1890.

and returns to them only to recount to them visions of righteousness and judgment.

According to Cramer,¹⁶ the passage was originally a marginal reference and should read: 'Ενώχ τοῖς ἐν φιλακῇ instead of 'Εν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐνφυλακῇ, as we now have it. Without having seen Cramer's suggestion, J. Rendel Harris and M. R. James independently proposed: ἐν ᾧ καὶ 'Ενώχ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ.¹⁷ The first of Harris' articles just referred to suggests a textual emendation of I Pet. 1:12 from Enoch 1:2, which concerns us here only as leading to his further proposals. In the second article he passes from the traces of the use of the first chapter of Enoch in the first chapter of Peter to the case in point. In Enoch 21:10 we read: "This place is the prison of the angels, and here they will be imprisoned for ever." Originally our passage (I Pet. 3:19) read: ΕΝΩΚΑΙ[ΕΝΩΧ]ΤΟΙCΕΝΦΥΛΑΚΗ. The name of Enoch has dropped out in copying. As ἐν ᾧ is characteristically Petrine (I Pet. 1:6; 2:12; 4:4), this emendation is preferable to Cramer's. Note in Enoch, chap. 12; πορεύου, εἶπε . . . ὁ δὲ 'Ενώχ . . . πορευθεὶς εἶπεν. St. Clair¹⁸ contributes to the discussion the fact that Tartarus is not Hades and is not accessible from Hades. "Hades is the underworld, but Tartarus is the nether heaven." The souls of men were supposed to go after death to the lower parts of the earth, while angels banished from heaven went to the lower hemisphere of the skies. "Mr. Gladstone recognizes that in Homer Aides (Hades) seems to be for men, and Tartarus for departed and condemned immortals (*Juventus Mundi*, p. 374)." Farmer¹⁹ shows that the proposed substitution of 'Ενώχ for the received text, or the addition of the word, is "a proposal of at least one hundred and thirty-nine years standing." The Greek New Testament of Boyer, the learned printer, 1763, largely quoted and indorsed, contained it. "Nihil sub sole novum!" Finally Harris²⁰ brings to light other and earlier anticipations—cases of the re-emergence of a for-

¹⁶ *Exegetica et Critica*, II. *Het glossematisch Karakter van I. P.* 3: 19-21; 4:6. 1891.

¹⁷ Harris, "An Unobserved Quotation from the Book of Enoch," *Expositor*, VI, iv, pp. 194-99; "A Further Note on the Use of Enoch in First Peter," *ibid.*, VI, iv, pp. 346-49; "On a Recent Emendation in the Text of First Peter," *ibid.*, VI, v, pp. 317-20.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, VI, vi, pp. 70-72.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, vi, pp. 377 f.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, VI, vi, pp. 378 ff.

gotten emendation—and he considers that his case is fully made out. But Clemen had already been drawn into the discussion in opposition. Into the doctrinal issue we do not enter—the bearings upon the “larger hope.” But Clemen showed²¹ that there is nothing in the context to suggest as appropriate the introduction of a proclamation of judgment delivered by Enoch to the angels. *κηρύσσειν* is uniformly the preaching of salvation.

Gunkel²² now comes forward with a view that necessitates no emendation of the text and eliminates the proclamation of judgment. The preaching was indeed to the fallen angels, but it was one of salvation. In the Christian version Christ takes the place which Enoch had in the Jewish tradition. Christianity transcended Judaism in that it held that forgiveness was possible for the worst transgressors. The preaching took place after the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Gunkel protests that the tradition tells nothing of an imprisonment of the souls of men of Noah’s time, who indeed died, whereas the fallen spirits could not die and were therefore imprisoned.

Certainly the passages in First Peter must be read with the then current eschatology in mind. Sheol, the dark underworld in which the ghosts of the dead flitted about, had become a definite and familiar region to the thought of late Judaism. In the older prophetic stage Jehovah’s self-manifestations were mostly bound up with the nation’s fortunes, although there were even then current among the people ideas regarding the abode of God and his angels and the region of the departed.²³ The Old Testament Sheol is essentially the Homeric Hades. This conception prevailed till the second century B. C., though individual voices had been raised against it in favor of a more moral and religious view. Then it became a place where men are treated according to their deserts, with separate divisions for the righteous and the wicked. The idea of an intermediate state also entered. Finally, it was used of the abode of the wicked only, either as their preliminary or their final abode. Gehenna was the place of final condemnation.

²¹ *Ibid.*, VI, vi, pp. 316–20.

²² *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, zweite Auflage, 1908, II, S. 561, 562.

²³ Gen. 28:12; Exod. 24:10; I Kings 22:19; Isa., chap. 6; Ezek., chap. 1. Passages on Sheol are too numerous to cite. See also Gressmann, *Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Escatologie*.

On the other hand, the transformed Holy Land, the new Jerusalem, more or less supernaturalized, was to be the place of the consummation for the elect, to which in late thought the religious were to be restored from Sheol. With the increasing transcendentalism the heavenly consummation was thought of as taking place after the earthly. Between the earthly place and the heavenly place was Paradise, the abode of the few who had escaped death, such as Enoch, Moses, and Elijah. As was the case among the Babylonians, the followers of Zoroaster, and the Greeks, so also among the Jews before the Christian era, belief was common in a plurality of the heavens. In the second and third chapters of the Testament of Levi²⁴ we find a description of the seven heavens. "The lowest is the gloomiest, because it witnesses every iniquity of men." In the second "are all the spirits of the lawless ones which are confined for punishment." In the third are the armies appointed to execute vengeance on the spirits of deceit. In the fourth are thrones and authorities in which hymns are ever offered to God. In the fifth are angels. In the sixth "are the angels of the presence of the Lord, who minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of ignorance of the righteous." "In the highest of all the great Glory dwells, in the holy of holies."

In the Book of the Secrets of Enoch (written mainly in Greek at Alexandria, though portions are from a Hebrew original, at about the beginning of our era) we have the most elaborate description of the seven heavens. In the second heaven were angels gloomy in appearance, who "had apostatized from the Lord and transgressed together with their prince." In the third heaven is located the garden of Eden with the tree of life and an olive tree always distilling oil. Paradise is likewise identified with the third heaven of Paul's vision (II Cor. 12:3, 4). But in the northern part of this heaven is the place of the damned, which has both fire and ice on all sides, so that it burns and freezes. Enoch exclaimed: "Woe, woe! How terrible is this place!" The men replied: "This place, Enoch, is prepared for those who do not honor God, who commit evil deeds on earth." In the fifth heaven were hosts of angels whose countenances were withered and whose lips were silent, because their

²⁴ See Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 1908.

brethren had sinned and were undergoing torments in the second heaven. Enoch informed them that he had prayed for their brethren but God had condemned them to be under the earth; he rebuked them for their silence, and exhorted them to resume their worship. They did so, but their voices went before the Lord with sadness and tenderness.

In the same book (41:5) Enoch is represented as seeing in Hades all his forefathers, beginning with Adam and Eve; and he sighed and wept, and spoke of the ruin caused by their wickedness.

Enoch, chap. 22 (Ethiopic), contains a detailed description of Sheol or Hades, a place of provisional rewards and punishments. It is situated, not as in the Hebrew conception and in other parts of this book, in the underworld, but more in accordance with Greek and Egyptian ideas, "in the west." There are three or four divisions in Hades, one or two for the righteous and two for the wicked. "These hollow places whereon the spirits of the souls of the dead are assembled have been created to this very end, that all the souls of the children of men should assemble here. These places are appointed as their habitation till the day of their judgment and till their appointed period, and this appointed period is long, till the great judgment comes upon them." The first division is for the spirits of the children of men who met with a violent and undeserved death, such as Abel and doubtless many of the Chasidim of the author's own time; they cry continually to God for vengeance. The second division (if here a second division is intended) is for the souls of other righteous people. The next is for sinners who escaped judgment in this life. The last is for sinners who suffered in this life and who cry for vengeance; their punishment is less than that of the former class, for "their souls will not be slain on the day of judgment," nor will they be raised for a severer condemnation.

The value of this long exhibit is in enabling us to realize the change from the Old Testament Sheol, a place of a semi-conscious, non-moral state of existence, where family, national, and social distinctions of this world are in a way preserved, to a place of fully conscious existence, where distinctions are primarily moral. We have noted in this other-world the freedom with which spirits come and go and converse is held. A second instructive observation is

the solicitude and sympathy now and then manifested for those whose lot is hard. This latter characteristic comes out most strikingly and beautifully in the Apocalypse of Ezra. The writer's heart is not satisfied with contemplation of the messianic, eschatological programme according to which this evil world will be destroyed and a new world take its place, for "the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments unto many" (7:47). The fact is that his difficulties are never satisfactorily met. It is likely that there were others both in Judaism and Christianity who shared the same concern in regard to the destiny of sinful men after death.

The *descensus ad inferos* appears a number of times in the Christian literature of the New Testament period. It is a special form of this belief that is found in First Peter. Certain descriptions of Sheol among the Old Testament prophets seem to have a special bearing upon the New Testament development of the conception. Of Babylon it is said: "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the shades for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. They all shall answer and say to thee: Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like us?" (Isa. 14:9, 10). Kings and dignitaries "shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the dungeon, and shall be shut up in the prison" (*δεσμοκτήριον* and *ῥχύρωμα* are the words used in the LXX) till the final judgment (Isa. 24:21, 22). See also Ezek. 32:17-32.

Other passages may have had their bearing upon the evangelical feature of the descensus. The Servant of Yahweh was called "to bring the prisoners from the dungeon and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house (*ἐξ οἴκου φυλακῆς*, Isa. 42:7). He shall say to those that are bound: "Go forth," and to those that are in darkness: "Show yourselves" (Isa. 49:9). The familiar words of Isa. 61:1, 2 need not be quoted.

We are now ready to glance through Christian literature in this period, beginning with the epistles of Paul generally recognized as genuine. In I Cor. 15:29 Paul refers to the early Christian custom of baptizing for the dead: "Else what good will those be doing who are baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized on their behalf?" In this custom there

is evidently a bond of thought between the gospel and the dead, somehow mediated by the living. In Rom. 10:6, 7 we read: "Do not say in thy heart: Who will go up into heaven?—that is, to bring Christ down—or Who will go down into the abyss?—that is, to bring Christ up from the dead." The work of redemption has been already accomplished; Christ has already gone down to the abyss. In Rom. 14:9 Paul says: "For this very purpose Christ died and came back to life, that he might be Lord over both dead and living." The great passage Phil. 2:5-11 has its suggestion. Here it is said that from the beginning Christ Jesus had the divine nature; nevertheless he did not look upon equality with God as something to be clung to; but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant and becoming like men. He further humbled himself by submitting to death on a cross. Therefore God raised him to the highest place and gave him the name above all others, that in honor of the name of Jesus "every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and in the region beneath the earth (*καταχθονίων*), and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Before him every knee should bend among angels, among men, and among the dead.

According to Matt. 12:40 Jesus uttered the following prophecy: "For just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights."

Peter, in the sermon at Pentecost, is quoted as having referred Ps. 16 to Christ: God released Jesus the Nazarene from the pangs of death and raised him to life, since it was impossible for death to retain its hold upon him (Acts 2:24). The Psalmist had said concerning him:

Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades,
Nor give up thy holy One to see corruption (vs. 27).

The Psalmist was looking toward the future and referring to his resurrection, the passage goes on to explain, when he said that the Christ was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption (vs. 31). Peter is reported to have said later that Jesus the Christ is appointed by God to be Judge of living and dead (Acts 10:42).

The next great passage is Eph. 4:8-10, which begins with a quotation from Ps. 68:18:

When he went up on high, he led captives (*αἰχμαλώσιν*) into captivity;
He gave gifts to men.

Then follows the explanation: "Now as for this 'going up,' what does it mean but that he had also gone down into the lower parts of the earth? He that went down is the same as he that went up—up beyond all the heavens, that he might fill all things." The meaning seems to be that Christ went down to Hades, and led captive souls he found there to heaven. Were these captives persons who belonged to him already, or were they new converts he had made among "the rebellious" mentioned in the psalm quoted? It was an early view that the opening of the tombs at the death of Christ and the return to life of many of the saints, mentioned in Matt. 27:52, 53, was due to the appearance of Christ in Hades.

The Apocalypse of John is in accord with the apocalyptic literature already reviewed at length, with the addition of Jesus Christ in the central place. He has the keys of death and Hades (1:18). He opens and no one shall close, and he closes and no one opens (3:7). Beings under the earth (*ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς*) are mentioned along with the hosts in heaven and on earth as ascribing glory to the Lamb (5:13). The souls of martyrs under the altar cry for vengeance, and are told to rest a little while till their number is complete (6:9-11). Satan is in prison (*φυλακή*) for a thousand years (20:7). The place of final punishment is the lake of fire and brimstone (20:10). Probably the words ascribed to Jesus in John 5:25-29 need not be considered in this connection: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall live," etc.; though Monnier²⁵ makes much of the passage.

In the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians (9:3) it is said that the prophets, being in the spirit, waited for Christ as their Teacher; and on that account he whom they rightly waited for, when he had come, raised them from the dead. In Hermas, Sim. 9:16:5, 6, we read that apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after falling asleep, preached it in the power and faith of the Son of God also to those who were asleep, and they gave them the

²⁵ *Le Première Épître de l'apôtre Pierre*, 1900, pp. 301-3.

seal of the preaching. Accordingly they went down with them into the water, and again they came up. In the Gospel of Peter it is related that a voice from the heavens was heard on the morning of the resurrection: "Hast thou preached to those that sleep?" And an answer was heard from the cross: "Yes."

In his *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, 1909, S. 153-56, Clemen discusses the alleged dependence of the belief in the descent of Christ to Hades upon non-Jewish sources, giving full reference to the literature. He combats the views of Bousset, Gardner, Pfeiderer, Gunkel, Zimmern, A. Meyer, Soltau, H. Holtzmann, and others, who think that there is more or less dependence, direct or indirect, upon Babylonian, Mandaic, or Greek religion. He is doubtless right in saying that there is no need for seeking such parallels, and that the special form in which the conception appears in First Peter is explicable throughout without resorting to foreign influences. But he seems to manifest too great zeal in entirely excluding such influences. In his commentary on the Apocalypse of John,²⁶ Bousset, commenting on 1:18, refers to the "widespread myths" of the passage to Hades (Hadesfahrt), and says that they appear to be closely connected. In his *Hauptprobleme* (S. 255) he says that only such connection explains the fact that this speculation found so early a place in the Christian religion. The assurance with which it is presupposed and referred to in the New Testament is in his view explained only on the assumption that the idea existed before it was referred to the person of Jesus. H. Holtzmann²⁷ expresses more moderately the same view. The idea might have arisen spontaneously on Christian soil, he thinks, where the universe was thought of as constructed after the manner of a three-story building. Indeed, with their conception of the messiahship of Jesus, his death, and his resurrection on the third day, some such view was a logical necessity. Yet its concrete and clear form was due to the fact that the whole atmosphere of the time offered it both invitation and abundant means.²⁸

²⁶ *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, in the Meyer series, sechste Auflage, 1906, S. 198.

²⁷ *Höllenfahrt im Neuen Testament*, "Arch. f. rel. Wiss.", 1908, S. 285 ff.

²⁸ Clemen sees in this very temperate judgment "an unnecessary concession to the religionsgeschichtliche Schule," but what objection can there be to making concession to a well-supported position?

The words of Pfeiderer will show at least how congenial was the conception to the larger world into which Christianity was entering:

For the solution of this pressing question (that of a blessed immortality) in the first instance ancient myths offered welcome starting-points. Above all there was the legend, recurring in different forms almost everywhere, of a divine or half-divine being who went down into the kingdom of the dead and tasted the terrors of hell, but by his own divine power or by a messenger of the gods sent to his help he was again brought back happily and victoriously to the world above of light and life. All these legends of the journey to hell of Istar, of the Mandaic Hibil Ziwa, of Hercules and Orpheus, of the robbery and return of Persephone, have this in common, that the power of death was once overcome by superior divine might and the prison of Hades was open.²⁹

Commenting upon the first chapter of the Apocalypse of John, Pfeiderer says:

Likewise a Christian use of an old myth we shall have to find in verse 18, where Christ says of himself that he was dead and is now living and possesses the keys of death and Hades. This power of the keys over death belongs in Jewish thought only to God; here it is ascribed to the Son of Man as to the very one who was dead and therefore in Hades, but was once more living and returned victorious. Herein we recall the Babylonian-Gnostic myths of the conquest over the powers of death through a divine hero who went down into the underworld, broke its gates, captured its keys, and as victor over death and hell returned to the world of life and light, to be redeemer and guarantee of life for his own.³⁰

We see that belief in the descent of Christ into Sheol or Hades after death was natural and necessary in the light of the ancient view of the world, and that in one form or another it again and again emerges. We have found suggestions that in connection with his presence there divine power was exercised. We have discovered among Jews and Christians great concern for those who had died in their sins. A fundamental declaration of the Christian message was that salvation is possible only in Christ (Acts 4:12). So far as concerned the present generation Paul had applied to Christian preaching the words of Ps. 19:4:

Their sound went forth into all lands,
And their words into all the world" (Rom. 10:18).

They had had and would have their chance. But to former generations had not been granted the opportunity of believing on Christ.

²⁹*Das Urchristentum*, II, S. 181.

³⁰*Urchristentum*, II, S. 288.

Now as Christ was once in Hades, he must have preached to them there.³¹

In the First Epistle of Peter the end in view is not instruction in doctrine, but a certain kind of conduct. Yet place cannot be given in this article to a consideration of the practical and ethical bearings of the christological doctrine introduced.³²

³¹ So Clemen, *Niedergefahren zu den Toten*, 1900.

³² A briefer treatment of the Christology, setting forth however its genetic relationships and place in the thought-movement, is presented in the author's *Outline of New Testament Christology: a Study of Genetic Relationships within the Christology of the New Testament Period* (The University of Chicago Press, 1909).